



ROBERT G. ATKINS

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County of San Diego

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To: San Diego County Citrus Handlers

CITRUS HANDLING PROTOCOL

In the past week, citrus growers in California, including San Diego County, have experienced freezing temperatures that were low enough and of sufficient duration to cause severe fruit damage. After consultation with Agricultural Commissioners in other citrus producing counties, the following has been agreed upon:

- All fruit sent to packinghouses will be placed under a Disposal Order.
- It is requested that packers voluntarily hold fruit harvested on or after January 12, 2007, for five days from the date of harvest. This will provide an opportunity to fully assess the level of freeze damage.
- If fruit is packed and shipped prior to the expiration of the five-day period, an official sample will be taken at the time of packing and held until such time that a full determination of the quality can be made. This determination will be made within eight days of taking the sample. If the sample fails to meet the minimum quality standards, a Notice of Violation will be issued. Civil, criminal or administrative penalties may be imposed for violations of the California Food and Agricultural Code and the California Code of Regulations.
- For example, if fruit is harvested on January 15, 2007, an official sample will be taken if it is packed and shipped prior to January 19, 2007.

The enforcement of these industry developed measures are considered necessary to minimize the possibility of poor quality fruit entering wholesale and retail markets and damaging consumer confidence.

Thank you for your cooperation during this difficult time. Should you have any further questions, please call (858) 694-2778.

Sincerely,

ROBERT G. ATKINS
Agricultural Commissioner/
Sealer of Weights and Measures